



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

18 MARCH 2021

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) San Bernardino – First Case of Brazilian Variant Found in Southern California

(U) A San Bernardino resident has been confirmed with having the first known case of a Brazilian variant of COVID-19. The California Department of Public Health [CDPH] was alerted on Saturday, 13 March. The P.1 variant is listed under the "Known Variants of Concern in California" by the CDPH. The P.1 variant is believed to be more contagious than the more-common strain of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. San Bernardino County officials say they are taking "immediate and aggressive action to contact trace and contain the virus and working with the CDPH in expanding whole genomic sequencing to identify more cases."

SOURCE: 18 March 2021, [ABC 10](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) District of Columbia – Man Arrested Near VP Residence had Rifle and Ammunition

(U) Washington – A man was arrested Wednesday after he was stopped by the US Secret Service near the Naval Observatory in Washington, traditionally the home of the US vice president, and was later found to have had a rifle and a large amount of ammunition in his car. Agents detained the man, Paul Murray, 31, as a possible suspicious person after they spotted him near the observatory around noon, DC Metropolitan Police said. Murray was the subject of an intelligence bulletin from Texas that circulated to police in the area. Police officers searched Murray's car, where they found the weapon and ammunition, police said.

SOURCE: 17 March 2021, [NBC News](#)

(U) District of Columbia – US Subpoenas Chinese Communications Firms

(U) Washington – The US Commerce Department said on Wednesday that it has served subpoenas on multiple Chinese companies that provide information and communications technology services in the United States to see if they pose a national security risk. The subpoenas will gather information to allow authorities to decide for possible action that best protects the security of American companies, American workers, and US national security. In response, China urged the US to "stop overstretching the concept of national security to politicize economic issues," adding that China will take measures to safeguard the rights and interests of Chinese companies.

SOURCE: 18 March 2021, [Reuters](#)

(U) New York – ADL Report: White Supremacist Propaganda Hit an All-Time High in 2020

(U) New York City – Incidents of white supremacist propaganda hit an all-time high in 2020, according to a new report from the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism, which has tracked racist propaganda for decades. Anti-Semitic, racist, and anti-LGBTQ+ posters, flyers and graffiti were recorded 5,125 times in 2020, according to the report; almost twice the number of incidents recorded in 2019. The report, released today, details incidents in every state excluding Hawaii. It includes 130 incidents of white supremacists putting up banners, 56 in-person white supremacist events, and 283 incidents of anti-Semitic language or propaganda that specifically targeted Jewish institutions, a 68% increase from 2019.

SOURCE: 18 March 2021, [USA Today](#)

UNCLASSIFIED

(U) South Carolina – Officials Investigating Claim Recent Cyber Attacks Obtained Employee Records

(U) Georgetown County – Officials say cyber criminals may have obtained sensitive and personal information of some county employees during a ransomware attack in January, media reported Wednesday. A county official confirmed the attack, and that a ransom was demanded, but the county opted not to pay. Last month, the county said the hack was traced to an email sent to the county that was described as "a very sophisticated attempt to gain access to the county network." Experts said it was "something most people would have mistaken for being a legitimate email. According to the official, Georgetown County is actively working with the State Law Enforcement Division to verify whether the claims of having sensitive employee information is factual.

SOURCE: 18 March 2021, [News 2 NBC](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) Afghanistan – Four Killed in Bombing of Afghan Government Bus, Nine Die in Helicopter Crash

(U) Kabul – Four people were killed and nine wounded when a roadside bomb hit a bus carrying Afghan government employees in Kabul on Thursday, while nine Afghan security force members died in a helicopter crash late on Wednesday, officials said. The blast hit a bus which was rented by the Afghan Ministry of Information and Technology to transport employees, said Abdul Samad Hamid Poya, a ministry adviser. No one claimed immediate responsibility for the blast, but the Afghan government has blamed Taliban insurgents for recent attacks targeting government employees, civil society figures and journalists. The Taliban has denied involvement in the campaign.

SOURCE: 18 March 2021, [Reuters](#)

(U) Australia – Two Men Charged with Terrorism in Melbourne, One an Alleged ISIS Member

(U) Melbourne – A teenager allegedly bought a knife minutes before he was arrested and charged with terror offences. Aran Sherani was charged with a string of terror offences including being a member of the Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) after he was arrested by counterterror police yesterday. Investigators allege the 19-year-old and his brother Ari Sherani started a fire in Humevale but had plans for more violence by committing an act of terrorism with a knife.

SOURCE: 16 March 2021, [9 News Australia](#)

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